



# **HOUSTON FIRE DEPARTMENT**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **HFD partners with Museum to salute HFD black firefighter history**

The Houston Fire Department is partnering with the Houston Fire Museum, located at 2403 Milam, to salute its black firefighters during Black History Month with a special exhibit. Students from local elementary schools will be touring the museum beginning, February 10, 2005 at 10 a.m.

The history of black firefighters is brief when compared to other ethnic groups of firefighters in the Houston Fire Department. Due to many conditions and prejudices blacks were not allowed in HFD until late 1955.

Black residents sought to enter the mainstream of Houston's economy and to make contributions and to serve the community. In 1950, a delegation of six black citizens representing the Clinton Park and Trinity Garden Civic Club, the Greater Fifth Ward Political League, the Elks Civil Liberties Committee, and Local 872 of the AFL International Longshoreman went before City Council to request that blacks be hired as firefighters. Unfortunately, the City leaders did not act upon this request.

In 1955, the City of Houston annexed the community of Clinton Park, a highly concentrated area of black residents. Prior to this time, the community had a volunteer fire department. With the annexation of this small middle-class area, the City of Houston agreed to hire black firefighters to man Station 42, which was the newly given name of the former volunteer fire station.

Ten black men were selected to go through firefighter training along with 28 white men. Only nine of the black men completed the Fire Training School. These men began their training on August 8, 1955, and completed it on September 20, 1955. The starting salary was \$255 for fire cadets and after training the salary for \$330 per month.

The Houston Fire Museum is open Tuesday through Saturday from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission is \$2.00 for adults and \$1.00 for kids, students and seniors. For more information about the museum, visit [www.houstonfiremuseum.org](http://www.houstonfiremuseum.org).

